

The Old Militia Law of Canada, The New Militia Laws of Australia and New Zealand, and Lord Kitchener's Report.

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Events in connection with reorganization of the Militia within the British Empire are moving so rapidly that one might well hesitate before placing pen to paper on the subject, especially when great modern soldiers like Lord Kitchener and Sir John French are advising the over-seas Dominions of the Empire. It may, however, not be out of place to consider at this juncture the respective Militia Laws as they exist to-day in Australia and New Zealand and as they existed in Canada more than a hundred years ago, and their bearing on the position.

Lord Kitchener found in the Southern Seas a Commonwealth and a Dominion which had just adopted systems of naval and military training quite in line with modern progressive thought; but Sir John French, on the other hand, has no doubt been much handicapped by discovering that the present military training system in Canada is founded on the voluntary basis, and that in this country at large there is complete indifference to the matter of defence, and a general marked disinclination to make personal self-sacrifice in connection therewith.

FRENCH PERIOD.

To appreciate our 1808 Militia Act we must go back to the French occupation of Canada, to the old French laws or regulations, and then to the ordinances founded on them and issued by British Governors.

Mr. Benjamin Sulte of Ottawa has been undoubtedly the leading authority on the French Militia, and I therefore draw the following interesting historical facts relating to it from his extensive and valuable work on that subject: *

* See also Mr. Sulte's paper in Transactions of the Institute for 1906-07, p. 27-32.